

Keys to the Qur'an

Volume 5
Commentary on Juz Amma

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CHAPTER 112

Surat Al-Ikhlās (The Unity)

(Meccan Surah)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Amir al-Mu'minin Sayyidna 'Ali, *'alayhi-s-salām*, said that there is no interpretation for this surah because its meaning is not at all veiled. Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn, *'alayhimu-s-salām*, were asked to comment on it, and each one gave a different interpretation of some of the words. There is very little we can say about this surah, although there have been reams of pages written about it.

We will follow in the footsteps of our Imam 'Ali and we will make as brief an interpretation as possible. This surah is one of the most important ever revealed. There are many reports about this surah, especially in the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt (People of the [Prophet's] Household).

During one of the battles the odds were overwhelmingly against Amir al-Mu'minin, yet everything went smoothly for him. When the people who had fought next to him were asked what had happened, they replied that all he did was recite *Qul huwa'llāhu ahad*, "Say: He, Allah, is One."

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

1. Say: He, Allah, is One.

This is an injunction upon us to say it, whether we know the truth of it or not. Whatever degree of knowledge we may possess, He, Allah, is One.

اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ

2. Allah, the Eternal Refuge of all.

The Divine Name *as-Samad* means “eternal, forever,” although it implies more than that. *Samada* means “to be high or elevated”.

لَمْ يَكِلْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ

3. He begets not, nor is He begotten.

The meaning of this ayah is very clear. Allah is above involvement. He is above coming from something or having something come from Him, and nothing can be associated with Him. He is at a distance from all that we can discern as having an attribute. He is the immediate and sustaining Cause of all that we can discern, yet He is not involved in the creation in any way as a “creature”.

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

4. And like Him there is none.

Kufuwan, meaning “equal, like,” is derived from *Kafā*, “to be enough, sufficient.” Allah is sufficient unto Himself. The name *as-Samad*, also means “self-supporting, self-sustaining, self-containing.” There is no *mithāl* (likeness) of Allah. Allah is the Name to which all attributes and Divine Names point.

Nothing more can be said about this surah. We must read

and re-read it, and the more we do this, the deeper will grow our understanding.